

PETER'S REPENTANCE.

After he had denied his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. 3

S E R M O N

PREACHED FROM

MATTHEW XXVI. 75.

And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which he said; Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice; so he went out and wept bitterly.

And MATTH. V. 4.

Blessed are ye that mourn, for ye shall rejoice.

By a GODLY PASTOR.

Corrected and enlarged, and set forth for the good of all those that truly fear God.

G L A S G O W:

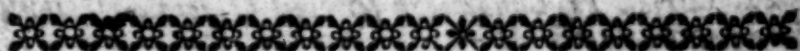
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PETER'S REPENTANCE.



MARK xiv. 68, 70.

And he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest: and he went out into the porch, and the cock crew, and he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by, said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereunto.

PETER is called Simon, an obedient hearer; he is also called Peter confident, and strong in faith, like a rock unmoveable: *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, Matth. xvi. 18.* He was penitent; the words now read unto you, do prove the sins: for after he had sinned, he went out. O that every Christian were qualified like Peter. Those that crave repentance faith and obedience, are better welcome to God, than the presents given by the three wise men unto Christ, *Mat. ii. 11.* Precious odour was not so much accepted as Peter's repentance. Gold, frankincense, and myrror, are not so precious as Peter's repentance to Godward, for he wept bitterly for denying his lord and master

master Jesus Christ. Mark xiv. 71. *But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.* So soon as he had learned to lie, he had learned to swear; they are inseparable companions and as I may say sworn brethren, that always meet together in a sinful society. We never read of Peter's swearing any where else, yet here upon a sudden, oaths and curses shewed themselves. No sooner Ham spied Noah's nakedness, Gen. ix. 22. *Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be.*

So he went out. This text affords us three special notes, being very remarkable in Peter's repentance, 1. Remembrance of sin. 2. Remorse of sin. 3. Sorrow for sin: all of which ought to accompany a godly and sincere convert in turning from his evil ways.

Thus having found out the mine, let us now dig for the treasure. So he went out: He was careless till the cock warned him, thereby learning, that the first step to repentance, is the remembrance of sin, and therefore David saith, Psal. li. 3. *My sins are before me.* Moses chargeth the people to remember their sins, how oft they provoked the Lord by that means calling them to repentance, Deut. ix. 7. He went out, another step of Peter's repentance, he first weighed his sin. Mark Noah, and in the meditation thereof, now only naked and bare, but he was wakened from his former drowsiness and slumber of sin. He went out, wherein observe, the effectual operations of God's spirit, in the children of God after we have sinned, spiritually the grace of God calleth us home again, and suffereth us not to rest, like the hope that was sent out from Noah, found no rest, Gen. viii. 9. Nor can Peter now find any rest, until he hath found Christ by repentance,

tance, whom he had lost by denial. Peter's sin was great, it was no small bait that Satan laid in his way, for great is the danger; for what greater advantage could Satan else have wished than this, had not the assisting hand of God's mercies staid him up after his fall, for his own glory, and to the unspeakable comfort of the godly, who though they fall, can never fall away: for the promise of God standeth sure, and hath this seal, God knoweth who are his. Our Saviour Christ saith, *Of those whom thou hast given me, I have lost none of them save the son of perdition*, John xvii. 12. He went out as Isaac went out into the field to pray, Gen. xxiv. 63. So Peter went out to meditate, and consider what he had done: *Peter went out and wept bitterly*, Luke xxii. 62. The faithful soul when it is so desirous to enter into an holy consultation, or conference, covets to be alone, like Christ in the desert, Matth. iv. 1. Jacob being alone wrestled with the angel, and prevailed for a blessing, Gen. xxxii. 24. Jonah went out of the city of Nineveh to mourn over it, as it is in Jonah iv. 5. So Jonah preached in Nineveh, that within forty days it should be destroyed, and they repented. Moses was bid to put off his shoes, when he passed near to the flaming bush, Exod. iii. 5. So we must put off our shoes of carnality, and go out from ourselves, as the adder casteth her slough, If we will tread upon holy ground, and press to come where God is. Peter so long as he staid in the high Priest's hall among the enemies of Christ, he became as one of them, and had quite forgotten that Christ was his master, and so denied him, whom a little before he promised to die for.

O what have I done, miserable man that I am!
how dangerously have I fallen, in denying him the

Lord of life and my Lord? I am a rebellious sinner to deny him that framed me, and by his truth redeemed me, and was I so wicked? if all the world were offended, yet I would not be offended: yea I was ready to lay down my life for Christ my Lord, and yet before the cock crew twice, I had denied him thrice, Matth. xxvi. 33. O perjured wretch that I am, how heavy have I transgressed my faith, by denying him that died for me! I that thought my faith was strong enough to encounter with the whole world, most shamefully suffered a woman, and the weaker vessel, to discountenance me. Is not this to be offended; and is this to give my life for my master; nay is not this to forsake him quite, and to join with the wicked; for I denied him whom my soul loved best, for which my name deserves to go with a brand upon it, as that of Jeroboam goes within his train. Peter confesseth his train of sins; and Jeroboam by name cannot only be mentioned, but his sins must be likewise here mentioned. Jeroboam goes with his train, Jeroboam that made Israel to sin; and Peter desirous to have his train too, Peter that denied his master; from henceforth Peter repented him of his heinous sins he committed, in denying his Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

Let us all repent with Peter, that God may give us the earnest of his grace in our hearts for ever; St. Paul saith, Heb. vi. 6. *He that sinneth, crucifieth the Son of God again*; so did Peter by denying his Lord and Master. Peter's faith was wavering faith, had not God looked again upon him with the eyes of mercy, and tender compassion: Be assured, that Peter had fallen from light into utter darkness and damnation, had he not truly repented with an unfeigned repentance, Psal. vii. 8, 9. Cast me not away in the time of age, forsake me not
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when my strength faileth me. Here we may see, how the prophet cries to God for mercy, as Peter did cry and weep with a most exceeding weeping, for denying his Lord and Master. Gen. xxvii. 34. *And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.* These are the words of Esau, the eldest son of Isaac, but the youngest in faith to God-ward. Blessed be thou which art the triumphant conqueror of hell, Hos. xiii. 14 the vanquisher of the Devil, Mat. iv. 10. the conqueror and destroyer of death, 1 Cor. xv. 55. and redeemer of them that were in darkness, and in the shadow of death, Luke i. 79. All ye that be thirsty, come unto the water, and you that have neither gold nor silver, come and receive all these precious treasures, free without paying any thing, Isa. lv. 1. This is the water of life, which springs out of the everlasting rock, the rock of defence, to all that believes in Christ our Lord, who is the enduring rock of our salvation in this world, and in the world to come, Amen.

But now Peter wept for his sins, and confesses his faults before God, by repenting of his sinful actions, which he had committed against God, he was taken for one of evil behaviour, and as one that kept evil company: for they said, *He receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,* Math. xi. 19. This is the lowliness, and meekness of our Lord and blessed Redeemer, who hath redeemed us from all evil, and looked upon Peter in mercy and love; for if Christ had not called Peter by repentance, Peter had been a damned creature for falling into so great a sin: for he did utterly deny Christ by lying and swearing, which are great sins, and without repentance cannot be forgiven. Christ hath command-

ed us to repent, Matth. iii. 2. *And saying repent ye for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* And Mar. iv. 18. *At that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.*

My brethren, here you may see how these places of scripture agree in one point, so must our minds be agreeable to the will of God, that we may walk in the light until we have light, and so walk in the laws and commandments of the most high God. Matth. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*

And let us make a good end by repentance: *I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Blessed are they that die in the Lord henceforth, even so saith the Spirit, that they rest from their labour and sorrow, and their works shall follow them,* Rev. xiv. 13. Here we may see that God blesseth those that fear him, even unto the death, that he might give them eternal life: *When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.* This is the hope of saints, and all the elect and people of God: Matth. x. 22. *He that endureth to the end shall be saved. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,* Rev. ii. 10.

Peter was faithful unto death, by repenting him of his sins, and Peter went out, and wept bitterly: so Peter repented with a faithful repentance. Then Peter said unto them, *Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost.* This Peter it was that denied Christ, but now doth plainly declare him to all people: Here is the unworthiness of those that look back by sin: and on
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the other side, *No man that puts his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is fit for the kingdom of God*, Luke ix. 62. But Peter looked back, by denying his Lord and Master Jesus Christ. It is a most certain truth, that God hath given unto us eternal life. So is this as certain, that this life is in his son, and in the next verse, *He that hath the son hath life, and he that hath not the son, hath not life*, 1 John v. 11, 12.

Now we may see, how blessed a thing it is to have the Son of God in our hearts by fasting and prayers, and by faith and truth: He that hath faith hath life eternal for evermore in the kingdom of heaven. The prophet David's prayer or arithmeticke, is thus termed: *Teach us, O Lord to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom*. Psal. xc. 10.

Peter wept because for the weight of grief and sorrow, for denying his Lord and Master Jesus Christ, which made him for doing that deed say, Troubles have compassed me round about, my heart is vexed and troubled, my sins are always before mine eyes, which do grievously torment my conscience, and labour to bear me down to hell: There is no peace for the terror of the Lord; I refuse to be comforted, I am troubled, and my spirit doth afflict me; I see no place whereunto I may flee, and seek a remedy for my sins.

But Peter denied his Master for fear: Then Peter denied again, and immediately the cock crew. Then said the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? he saith I am not, but denied, saying, I know not the man, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew: but he began to curse and swear, saying, I know not

not this man of whom ye speak. When Peter had gotten some feeling in his conscience, he went out and wept bitterly. *Awake to righteousness and sin not, for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame, 1 Cor. xv. 34. That thou mayest remember and be ashamed, and never open thy mouth more, Ezek. xvi. 63.*

Thus Peter is rejected for his swearing and lying, as it is in Rev. xxi. 27. *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.* When Satan had tempted Peter to swear, he tempted him to lie; if Peter had not speedily repented, he had been a lost man: But we read that Christ had mercy upon him, and called him from the error of his ways, and from that sinful deed.

Repentance is a turning to men, we must not be ashamed to acknowledge our faults one to another, James v. 16. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, and in so doing, men may know that ye are my disciples.* So that we ought to pray for one another; but on the contrary, we do rather curse one another: But woe unto them that do so, for hell-fire is prepared for the tormenting of their souls; being in that gulph of woe everlastingly tormented world without end, such torments that man cannot express; for if men would truly consider the pains of hell, they would undergo any thing in this world to gain the joys of heaven.

My brethren, let us now repent of our former sins and wickedness, that we may be found worthy to enjoy the kingdom of heaven, by a true repentance, as Peter did repent him of his sins, from the bottom of his heart with an unfeigned repentance; for you must know, true repentance comes from a-
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bove: *Every good and perfect gift, saith St. James, comes from above, James i. 17.* For all perfect gifts come from the Lord God of hosts. Christ is our salvation and hope, and for evermore to our souls and bodies.

But when Peter had learned to swear and to lye, and curse bitterly for to save his earthly life, not thinking of the life to come; Peter was afraid of the power of the high-priest, and did not think of the power of Christ, whose power is greater than the high-priest's. *For he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, with great power and glory.* Peter not thinking of his power, for if he had seriously considered the power of Christ, he would not have denied him by swearing, cursing, and lying.

Swearer, alas! though I did swear, yet I thought no harm. O fool, what prince hearing himself abused to his face, by the reproachful calumnies of his base subjects, would admit of such an excuse; that whatsoever he spake with his mouth yet he thought no ill in his heart. And shall God take this for a good answer, having told us before hand, Deut. xxviii. 58, 59. *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that art written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God: Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful, and plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sickness.*

Besides, how frequently dost thou pollute and prophane God's name, and our Saviour; the Jews grievously sinned in crucifying the Lord of life, but once, and that ignorantly; so Peter ignorantly denied Christ, but wisely repented him of that sin: but they are innumerable, that thou dost commit e-
very

very day in the year, every haur in the day, although thy conscience be guilty: Repentance maketh peace between God and your conscience for Christ's sake. Amen.

And the holy Spirit of grace hath rebuked thee for it a thousand, and a thousand times: how dost thou expect to have Christ thy Redeemer and Advocate, when thy conscience tells thee, that thou hast seldom remembered him, but in thy oaths to blaspheme him, and oftner named in thy oaths and curses, than in thy prayers: Surely if I did swear faith and truth, this swearing made many sinful souls fall into hell headlong; and if Peter had not speedily repented, he had fallen into hell torments, where there is nothing but howling, gnashing of teeth, misery, and lamenting for ever.

It is said, Lev. xix. 17. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise re-buke him, and not suffer sin upon him:* So Peter was rebuked of his conscience, it tells him that he had wickedly sinned, by denying his Lord and Master Jesus Christ: That is your gross ignorance of the scriptures, for the scriptures teacheth us to fear God; for God expressly forbids swearing, and that upon pain of damnation, James v. 12. *My brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by earth, neither by any other oath, but let your yea, be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation.* First our Saviour Christ in his own person forbids it, Matth. v. 34, 35, 36, 37. *I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by heaven for it is God's throne, nor by the earth, for it is his footstool: nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black: but let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay: for whatsoever*

is more than these, cometh of evil. And then the apostle James saith, *Above all things my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by any earth, nor by any oath. But let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation,* James v. 12. Where mark the emphasis in the first words, *Above all things swear not*: and the greatest danger of it is in the last words, *lest ye fall into condemnation*, for woe and sorrow will be in the end.

If the matter be light and vain, we must not swear at all; if mighty, then we may lawfully swear, as before a magistrate, being called to it, when we must only use the glorious name of our God in an holy and religious manner, as you may see in Deut. vi, 13. Isa. xlv. 23. and Isa. lxxv. 16. Josh. xxiii. 7. Exod. xxxiv. 13. Jer. v. 7. and the reasons are weighty if we look into them; for in swearing by any creature whatsoever, we do invoke that creature, and ascribe to divine worship; yea, whatsoever we swear by, that we invoke both our witness, surety, and Judge; and by consequence defile it, by ascribing and communicating unto it God's incommunicable attributes, and his omnipotency and omniscieny of being every where present, and knowing the secret thoughts, and intentions of the heart: and likewise an omnipotency, and as being almighty, in patronizing, proceeding, defending and rewarding us for speaking the truth, or punishing us if we speak falsely: all which are so peculiar to God, as that they can no way be communicated or ascribed to another: so that in swearing by any of these things, thou committest idolatry in an high degree, and thou spoilest and robbest God of his glory, the most impious kind of theft; and in a manner dethronest him; and makest an idol in his room: and as to swear by the creature, makes the
sin

sin more heinous, so the more mean and vile the things are which you swear by, as by my fey, by cock, and by hare's foot, and by cheefe, and such like childish oaths, which are so much in use with the ignorant and superstitious people; the greater is your sin in swearing such an oath, because you ascribe that unto these the basest of creatures, which is only proper to God, namely to know your hearts and to be a discerner of secret things: Why else should you call that creature as witness unto your conscience, that sees you speak the truth, and lye not, which only belongeth to God: and therefore the Lord calls it forsaking of him, as you may see what he saith, Jer. v. 7. *How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy children hath forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods.* And so make it a small matter to forsake, and to make a God of the creature, will ye believe the prophet Amos? if you will, he saith, speaking of them that swore by the sin of Samaria, *that they should fall and never rise again,* Amos viii. 14. A terrible place to vain swearers: but Peter fell, and rose again by faith.

Neither are we to join any other with God in our oaths, for in so doing we make base idols and filthy creatures; for Peter wept sorrowfully for his sin and offences he had committed against Christ his Lord and Master: and because he repented, God granted him mercy and forgiveness for all his offences which he had committed against him, by denying him with an oath, and cursing and lying: so that Peter's conscience told him that he was a great sinner in so doing, but he repented with a tender conscience, and he wept bitterly; repentance goeth before salvation, and salvation worketh the soul's everlasting joys, in the kingdom of heaven for evermore.

And a maid saw him again, and began to say
unto

unto them that stood by, This is one of them, and he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by, said again to Peter, surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto: but he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak: and the second time the cock crew, and Peter calls to mind the words that Jesus said unto him, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice, and he went out, and wept bitterly: Peter's heart misgave him, he sinned in so doing, and he wept for it bitterly: We have a command from God to shun all devices of evil works, St. Paul saith, Rom. vi. 23. *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Neither must we swear at all in ordinary communication, if we will obey God's word as you may see, Matth. v. 34, 35, 36, 37. Amos v. 12. And as it is in Exodus xxxiii. 2. *Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.* And St. Paul's everlasting rule is, Rom. xii. 2. *Fashion not yourselves according to this world, for this world passeth away and the glory thereof.* For as St. John saith, *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same denieth the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father.* But Peter denied God the Son, then he must needs deny God the Father, and God the Holy Ghost. For as Christ saith, He that sinneth against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but he that sinneth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven him: neither shall there be any remission of sins for that poor soul. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, Heb. x. 31. *Stand in awe therefore and sin not,* Psal. iv. 4. *Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.* And therefore flee from

from your youthful lust, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. For the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ draws near, when he shall come with his mighty angels in glory, honour, and power, and majesty, evangelizing to all. Consider what hath been delivered, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Amen.

FINIS.

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